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SUBJECT: JANUARY COLOMBIA STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE UPDATE

REF: BOGOTA 186

Summary

¶1. (SBU) The GOC made progress to secure adequate civilian ministry commitment to the National Consolidation Plan (PNC) but a great deal of work remains to be done. The Center for the Coordination of Integrated Action (CCAI) mapped consolidation regions down to the village level, which should facilitate the important tasks of creating a plan for permanent citizen security and an operational plan for each zone. The National Parks director highlighted the link between security, consolidation, and conservation. The GOC worked towards sustainability in a program designed to generate economic opportunities in Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities in southern Colombia. The GOC is aligning its 2010 manual eradication strategy with consolidation, but security challenges (including four possible electoral events this year) will make objectives difficult to achieve. Three NGOs discussed lack of awareness of the PNC among civil society and the need for more GOC outreach. End Summary.

Civilian Ministries Increasingly Engaged

¶2. (SBU) In January, the GOC made some positive steps forward in the interagency process, though much work remains to secure adequate civilian ministry commitments. First, the National Planning Department (DNP) completed an interagency exercise to identify the totality of GOC programs in consolidation zones to understand the various channels that resources could take to support consolidation. Second, the PNC was presented to the Council of Ministers, with President Uribe's attendance, on January 27 and deepened interest from several key Ministries including Transportation, Mines and Energy, and Interior and Justice (though Agriculture was reportedly "inflexible"). Finally, the CCAI (GOC's PNC coordinating mechanism) will formalize its Directive Committee (vice ministerial level PNC coordinating meeting) discussions with signed minutes.

Mapping Consolidation

¶3. (U) CCAI has further defined the PNC's geographic area, mapping each of the government's 101 priority municipalities (counties) down to the village level and identifying family and population numbers in each. The mapping exercise should facilitate identifying key population centers, developing security plans for territorial control, and creating comprehensive operational plans.

National Parks - Consolidation and Conservation

¶4. (SBU) National Parks, such as the Nudo del Paramillo in the Northern Band (straddling northern Antioquia and southern Cordoba departments) and the Macarena and Tinigua (Meta department) in the Central Band, account for a large portion of the ungoverned spaces in consolidation zones. Illegal armed groups and homesteaders take advantage of the lack of state presence to operate and grow coca, damaging the environment. At a CCAI Directive Committee, Parks

Director Julia Miranda lauded her agency's partnership with the military and police during the consolidation process to extend state presence into more parkland and thus protect reserves. As a continuing challenge, she highlighted the threat to water conservation efforts in the Nudo del Paramillo posed by four fronts of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Miranda also advocated for the Institute for Colombian Rural Development (INCODER) to advance clarification for titling of fallow lands and the relocation of homesteaders out of the Macarena parks.

Protecting Investment in Afro-Colombian and Indigenous Beneficiary Communities

¶5. (U) Narino Regional Coordination Center (RCC) Civilian Coordinator Ernesto Moreno has been charged with the priority task of ensuring the permanent protection of the Productive Ethnic Territories (TEP) project beneficiary communities in Narino and Cauca to guarantee the sustainability of that investment. The TEP program was designed to generate economic opportunities for Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations in southwestern Colombia (e.g., Narino, Cauca and Valle del Cauca).

GOC Aligning 2010 Manual Eradication Strategy with Consolidation

¶6. (SBU) Accion Social has focused its 2010 manual eradication strategy on consolidation zones. The three top priorities will be the Nudo del Paramillo (in the newly activated CSDI Northern Band), the Plan for the Integrated Consolidation of the Macarena (PCIM) region, and western Antioquia. Accion Social officials noted that the goal is zero coca in the first two zones and the rest of the country's coca efforts would focus on containing cultivation. A pilot program in the Nudo del Paramillo will integrate manual

eradication with food subsidies and alternative development opportunities for coca farmers. CSDI will be following this pilot closely to monitor its success and to what extent it integrates into the GOC's consolidation plans for this strategic region. The conflict between the "race for hectares eradicated" and territory consolidated still needs to be fully resolved, and the GOC has once more set an ambitious 70,000 hectare goal for manual eradication in 2010. This may mean that manual eradicators are directed towards areas where they can quickly boost their numbers instead of concentrating activity in places where social and economic programs can be jointly implemented.

17. (SBU) Ministry of Defense officials noted that total control of coca cultivation in the Nudo del Paramillo region would be challenging since security resources for manual eradication teams will be stretched thin this year given the possibility of four national elections (congressional, referendum, and up to two presidential rounds). Adding to the difficulty were dangerous security conditions in coca cultivation zones including active combat and the employment of mines in coca fields. Local commanders in northern Antioquia emphasized the security challenge by noting that 640 mines were seized in the area in one week and that the 25th Mobile Brigade had suffered dozens of injuries from landmine and IED-related incidents, many resulting in amputations, over the last year.

NGOs Discuss Lack of Outreach

18. (SBU) In a meeting with international donors on January 19, Gloria Florez of MINGA, Nancy Sanchez of INDEPAZ, and Father Rafael Castillo of the Development and Peace Network Foundation of Montes de Maria discussed Colombian civil society's lack of PNC understanding and its need to enter the PNC discussion. Florez cited a lack of dialogue when the GOC chose its priority zones and established RCCs. Castillo added that Montes de Maria communities do not understand why only four of the fifteen municipalities were initially targeted. He acknowledged that the written plan stipulates that consolidation efforts will spread to the other eleven municipalities over time but noted this was not well understood. Sanchez explained that there was an overall lack of understanding in communities about the PNC structure, objectives and implementation as well as little transparency about incoming resources. Castillo said that as written, there is nothing wrong with PNC concepts but he has not seen them implemented or explained in practice. All three agreed that there is no access to information and more outreach is needed to NGOs.

CSDI Training Judicial First Responders

19. (U) NAS sponsored judicial first-responder training to 100 local police and military personnel in Tumaco in December. This training improves local authorities' crime scene management and evidence collection skills. As many criminal cases in Colombia cannot be built due to poor first-responder work, the police and prosecutors believe that such training will increase criminal cases brought to court. This training is also taking place in CSDI Central and Northern bands from February to April.

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